

Seed Wheat For Next Year.

The Progressive Farmer often has occasion to cull strong and valuable farming articles from Wallaces' Farmer, and in its last issue we find another editorial which we must pass on to our readers. Says Dr. Wallace:

If the farmer is to succeed he must keep a good lookout ahead. His plans necessarily take in one or more year's work. He must have a definite system of rotation, should know where he is to put wheat and corn the next year and the year after, and in what years certain fields should be down in grass. If he is to improve his crops, he must improve his seed from year to year.

Sowing wheat, whether for winter or spring, is a good way off, but it is not too early to call his attention to the method in which he will secure the best seed. Whether he is growing winter wheat or spring wheat he should, in our judgment, select the best acre, or five acres, according to his requirements, while it is yet growing and ripening in the fields, and when it is fully ripe cut and stack it, and put it in his barn by itself. He should let it go through the sweat, and when the proper time comes thrash it by itself, taking care that there is no mixture from previous thashings of any kind of either inferior seed or foul seed.

Before seeding time comes he should provide himself with a good fanning mill, a grader if possible, and, without regard to waste or expense, blow out and sift out all small, immature, light weight, or damaged seed. He should next provide himself, if the fanning mill is not provided with them, with some screens that will allow all except the very largest and plumpest grains to pass through them, and these alone should be used for sowing his seed for the crop of next year. If time does not permit him to make this careful selection, this final sifting, for the whole of his seeding, let him carefully sift out enough of the larger seeds to sow a part of the field from which he intends to take his seed for the crop two years hence. Let him put this on his best land and give it the most thorough culture. If any of our readers will pursue this policy for five years they will not complain of seed wheat running out.

Why do we suggest this method? First, because the largest grains usually grow on the largest and most vigorous stalks or stools. They have a habit of growing large, and this habit, like all other inherited tendencies, is exceedingly valuable to the man who wishes to grow a large crop. Secondly, the larger amount of starch and gluten stored in the grain as food for the germ after it has begun to grow will push it forward rapidly, giving it a vigorous start and enabling it to withstand climatic and other influences that would tend to weaken the plant. A great deal depends on the plant getting a good start and growing off vigorously from the very beginning of its existence.

There are among our readers many retired farmers and those past middle age with more or less leisure time on their hands. It will pay these men to follow a method involving considerably more labor than the one we have suggested, but which will produce the very best results; namely, spend some time in their wheat fields when the grain is about ripe and select by hand the largest and best filled and most perfect heads, enough of them to produce a peck of seed. Plant this by itself, and note results. By following this up for a few years a variety of seed can be produced vastly superior to the seed which they have been sowing, in fact, almost a new variety. It is possible in this way to greatly improve the type and quality of any sort of wheat or other grain, and develop what is really an improved type, much superior to the stock with which they began. This has been done many times and can be done by any good farmer who knows a good head of wheat growing on a good, vigorous stalk, when he sees it.

The Audubon Bird Law.

Editors Progressive Farmer:

I have two little boys who have been counting the birds' nests they have found this season. They take much pleasure in watching the birds, and not for anything would they destroy the nests or capture the young birds. This reminds me very pleasantly of my own boyhood when I used to take so much interest in the little birds, and tried to learn all I could about them. I knew the note of every bird and many of their habits. I sometimes think that birds have given me more pleasure than any other one thing, and I feel sorry for the man who finds no pleasure in the cheering songs of these little feathered friends of ours.

What I started out to say especially is that birds are now becoming more plentiful. For quite a number of years little birds have been very scarce, and this probably accounts for the increase of insect pests that have become so numerous and destructive.

The Audubon law will doubtless be of great benefit to the State in a material way—not so much for the protection it gives to birds, nor on account of the penalty for their destruction, but more especially because the attention of the people has been directed to the value of birds as insect-destroyers. Men have become so material that their morality, religion, citizenship and everything else, are more easily influenced by a money value than by any sentiment of honor. Then as men see the value of birds they protect them, and this I think accounts for their increase. If the Government were importing birds instead of insects, I should have more faith in the experiment. The importation of ants will prove a curse, very probably, instead of a blessing. We have already too many ants. The "black leg" and "wilt" of cotton are both caused by ants, and who can tell what the new species will go to doing when they get here?

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